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MEDIA RELEASE
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U.S. ATTORNEY AND U. S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
ANNOUNCE GUILTY PLEA IN PASSPORT FRAUD CASE

CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE: United States Attorney Tom Colantuono and James P. Ennis, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Diplomatic Security, Boston Field Office, today announced that **DAVID ALEXANDER BERTRAND**, 46, of New York City, pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court in Concord to a charge of making false statements on an application for a United States Passport.

BERTRAND was indicted by a federal grand jury in September, 2005 after his passport application was found to contain false statements by personnel at the National Passport Center in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The indictment charged that **BERTRAND**, a citizen of the Dominican Republic, falsified a United States Passport Application by claiming that he was a United States citizen, and that he was born in Patterson, New Jersey.

According to the facts described at today's court hearing and admitted by **BERTRAND**, the passport application also set forth another individual's social security number, and was submitted to the State Department together with a counterfeit New Jersey birth certificate. When interviewed by Diplomatic Security Service agents in November, 2004, **BERTRAND** admitted that he was not a citizen, and that he had purchased the birth certificate and other supporting documents for \$4,000.00. **BERTRAND** faces a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment when he is sentenced on April 25, 2006.

The case is being prosecuted as part of Operation Checkmate, a joint initiative of the U.S. Attorney's Office, the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Diplomatic Security, the Department of Homeland Security Bureau of Customs and Immigration Enforcement, and the Social Security Administration Office of Inspector General. The goal of Operation Checkmate is to eliminate passport fraud, and thereby reduce identity theft while securing the Nation's borders. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael J. Gunnison.